

**HIRI Nonprofit Research Fellowship
Dr. Cedric D. Hackett**



**EXPLORATORY STUDY OF
SERVICES TO BLACK MALES BY SAN FERNANDO VALLEY NONPROFITS**

the **W.E.B. DU BOIS
FANNIE LOU HAMER
INSTITUTE**
for
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

CSUN

CALIFORNIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHRIDGE

SUMMARY REPORT

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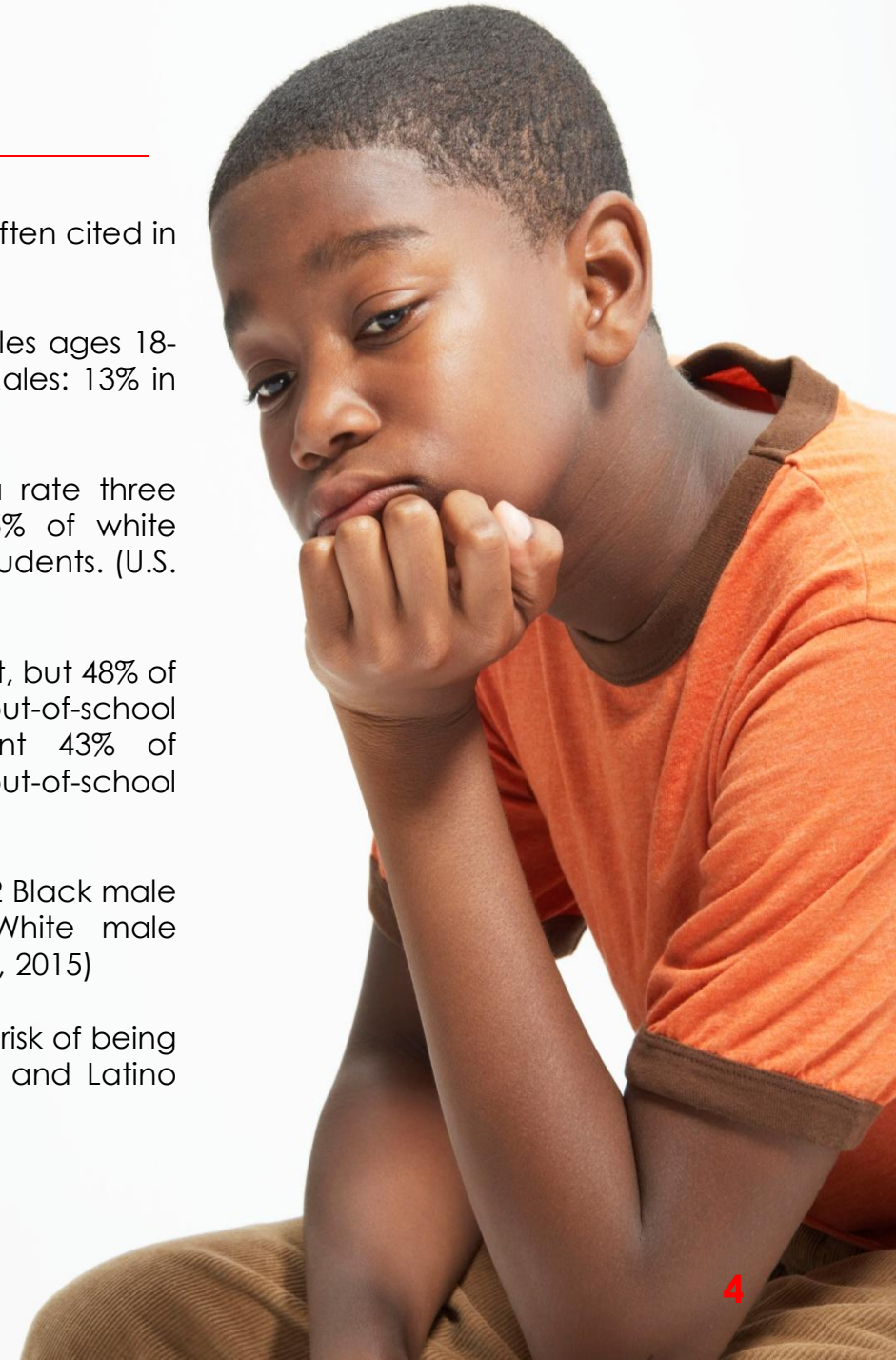
INTRODUCTION

Black males across the United States have endured major difficulties related to social acceptance, poor health outcomes, educational opportunities, employment, and high incarceration levels. These disparities are often the result of the socially constructed images “shaped by drugs, crime, athletics, and academic failure” (Harper & Davis III, 2012, p. 103). Many obstacles have been attributed including, “inferior public education before college, the absence of black men as role models, low expectations from teachers and other adults, low self-esteem, black men's own low aspirations and their tendency to drop out of high school in disproportionate numbers” (Maxwell, 2004, p. B1). While many initiatives are underway in the last few years, more research is needed to determine the level of support for this population and to encourage nonprofit service organizations to better serve Black males and other people of color. To this end, an exploratory study was necessary to understand how nonprofit organizations in the San Fernando Valley serve Black men (and youth).

BACKGROUND

Below is a summary issues pertaining to Black males often cited in research articles, reports, and other news outlets:

- From 1950-2010, joblessness among Native-Born Males ages 18-61 has increased significantly, especially for Black Males: 13% in 1950 to 42% in 2010 (Winters & Hirsch, 2013)
- Black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times higher than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended compared to 16% of black students. (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).
- Black children represent 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension; comparison, white students represent 43% of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension. (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).
- In the Los Angeles Unified school District, the 2011-12 Black male graduation rate was 41% compared to their White male counterparts (63%), a gap of 22%. (Schott Foundation, 2015)
- Black male high school drop outs are at the highest risk of being imprisoned by age 35 (68%) than their White (28%) and Latino (20%) male counterparts (Western & Pettit, 2010)



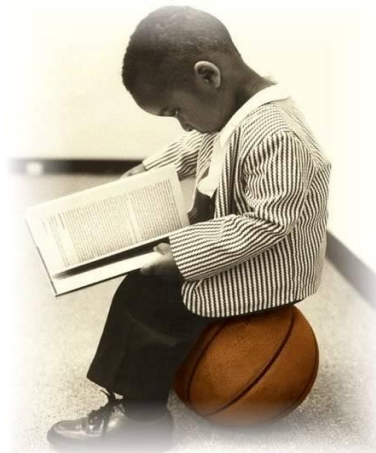
PURPOSE

The purpose of this report was to identify nonprofit organizations in the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles and their service of black males. Learning more about barriers and successes of local efforts and highlighting effective approaches is the first step in developing a comprehensive plan of action to increase social mobility and success for this population. The goal is to provide the non-profit sector in the San Fernando Valley and educational stakeholders with an evaluation of successful programmatic strategies that improve learning outcomes and satisfaction of Black males and the structural models that sustain them. To this end, this research also looked at mission statements of the selected participants to gain insight of their stated values, goals and objectives. The research question was: How do nonprofit organizations in the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles currently serve Black males?

In an effort to gain a composite profile of the nonprofit organizations selected, the interview protocol included structural, organizational, and service related questions.

"Focusing efforts on improving the lives of young boys and men of color is critical to the overall health of our communities and national economy."

~President Barack Obama



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF THE WEST VALLEY



METHODS

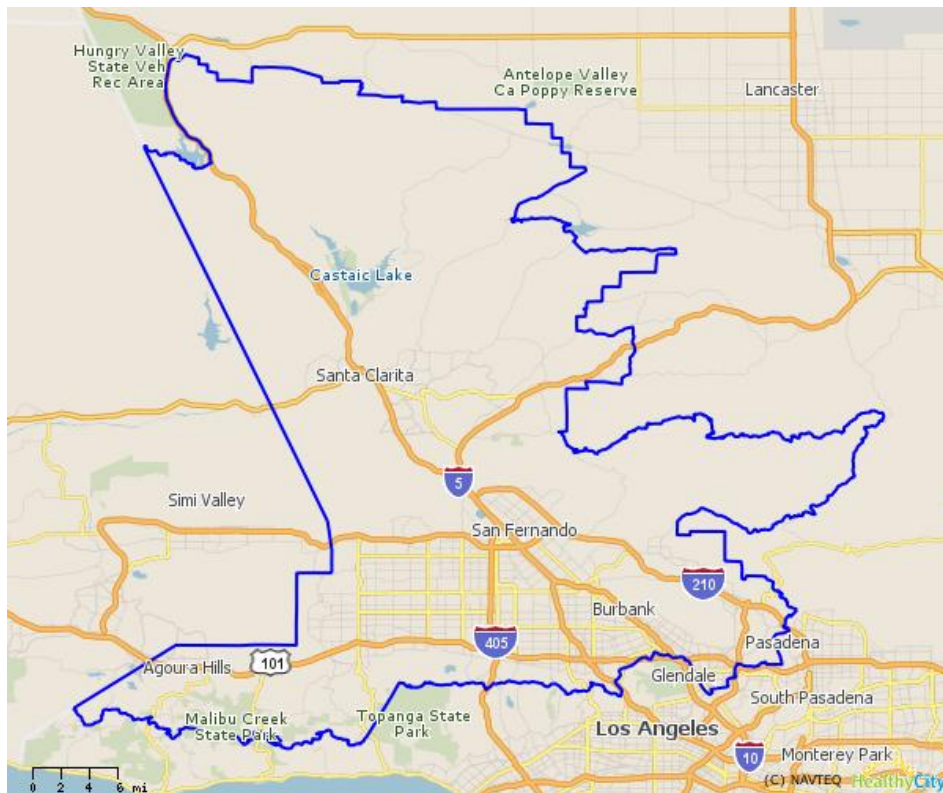
The method for this research was qualitative using site visit observations with a select group of nonprofit organizations. Qualitative research aided the researcher in gaining insights and understanding of how African American males are serviced by nonprofit organizations in the San Fernando Valley. Creswell (2008) defined qualitative research as “an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding central phenomenon” (p. 645). This study used purposeful sampling, in which the selection of the participants and sites were intentional. Procedures included interviews of organization directors and document analysis of existing information on Valley nonprofits, through websites. Four nonprofit organizations in the San Fernando Valley were identified and deemed appropriate for this study including:

1. Heroes of Life (**HOL**), Pacoima, CA
2. Students Run LA (**SRLA**), Tarzana, CA
3. Boys & Girls Club, West Valley (**WVBGC**), Canoga Park, CA
4. The Village Nation (**TVN**), El Camino, CA

Why I Selected these NPOs

Demographic Profile of San Fernando Valley

San Fernando Valley lies in L.A. County Service Planning Area (SPA) 2 (as shown below). The following profile of the San Fernando Valley is listed on the website of U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman (D-Sherman Oaks):
<http://sherman.house.gov/about-brad/the-valley-and-30th-district/san-fernando-valley-demographic-information>



Demographic Profile of San Fernando Valley

As of 2012, the population of the San Fernando Valley was 1.77 million. The Valley's population exceeds the populations of all but the four largest cities in the United States – New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston. The Valley's population has increased 3.5% since the 2000 Census.

According to Healthy City.com, there are 9,632 nonprofit organizations (NPOs) headquartered in SPA 2 that are classified by type as: educational institutions, youth development, or human services. For the purposes of this report, I focused on a sample size of 4 NPOs that resembled those classifications. Specifically, I queried NPOs that focused on racially specific targets and diversity targets.



MISSION of Selected NPOs in San Fernando Valley

Below provides a description and/or mission of each organization selected in the San Fernando Valley:

Heroes of Life

Heroes of Life, Inc. have Youth Programs in the Los Angeles and Ventura County areas. We train students from elementary school (age 8) through the age of 28. Our goal is to teach young people how to earn a living the honest way and we train them with positives so they will not join gangs. We work to prevent crimes. Heroes of Life is a 501© 3 non-profit organization. We train these youth in the areas of music, video & audio production, editing, songwriting, script writing, story boarding, sound reinforcement for events, internet radio broadcasting & story boarding sessions. This includes how to develop TV show, records, radio and television commercials, song marketing, promotion, video production terms and equipment, audio, studio terms and equipment, hands on training in audio and video production, and a field trip to recording studio. We also train in graphic and Fine Arts, music and voice lessons and performing arts, computer lessons and life skills courses along with mentoring and tutoring.

Its mission is to develop our community's youth and young adults by providing mutual technological business and other opportunities for the sole purpose on helping them discover and reach their fullest potential, we believe these things are done through caring, sharing, discipline, respect, love and forgiveness.

Students Run LA

The mission of Students Run LA is to challenge at-risk secondary students to experience the benefits of goal-setting, character development, adult mentoring and improved health by providing them with a truly life-changing experience: The training for and completion of the LA Marathon.

West Valley Boys and Girls Club

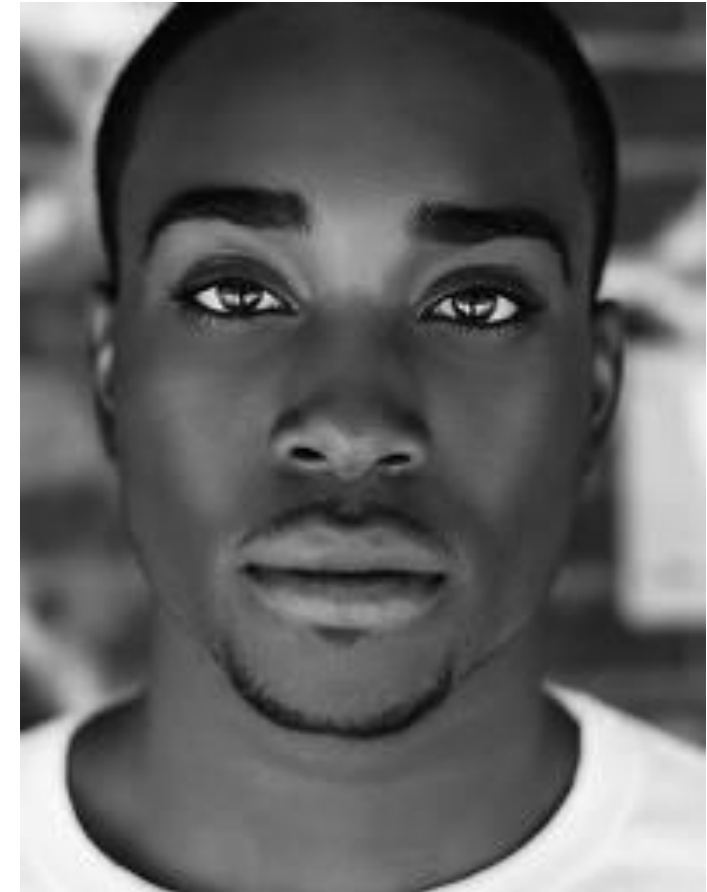
The Boys & Girls Club of the West Valley has impacted the lives of thousands of underprivileged children in the West Valley community. They have benefited from the after-school and summer programs offered by the Club at various sites over the course of 22 years.

The Mission of the Boys & Girls Club of West Valley is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.

The Village Nation

Our mission is to boost the capacity of caring adult mentors and support them in creating culturally responsive learning environments that engage and inspire African American youth and encourage them to embrace their natural intelligence and leadership capabilities. As a result, the youths can become more fully developed individuals, rooted in their history, who make better choices and demonstrate extraordinary achievement gains as they prepare to succeed in college, career, and community. In working with students, parents, teachers and administrators, we strive to maintain the highest possible standards and quality while grooming our youth to be the change agents of tomorrow.

Our philosophy is taken directly from the old African proverb: "It takes a village to raise a child."



"Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men."

~W.E.B. Du Bois

RESULTS

STRUCTURAL

Non Profit Organization	% of Black Males who are Board members, Executive Directors, and Staff	# Black Males in Leadership Roles	Effective Recruitment/ Retention of Black Males
HOL	Unclear	1	Difficult, competing with kids who want instant gratification
SRLA	0%	175 schools (500 total leaders)-volunteers who run the programs at their schools.	Not determined, Can only look at teacher of the class. They're recruiting themselves. Waiting list
WVBGC	0%	Large part-time staff, people of color mostly Hispanic. 2 Black males in these part-time positions	Seeks individuals who have a desire to serve kids of all types. Colorblind
TVN	60%	60%	Clear recruitment & Selection criteria, Engagement; meaningful roles; Valuing their service



RESULTS



ORGANIZATIONAL				
Non Profit Organization	Commitment of Racially Diverse and Inclusive Work Environment	Perceptions of Workplace Demographics	How to Retain Black males as staff	Diverse Classification
HOL	That's all we do. We love people, even gangs. Brings differences together in song, through rhymes or words	Sometimes people need to see somebody that look like them to feel like they got their back. Be respectful and responsible, and you are in the game	Love them, keep an open door policy, even if they go away, the door is always open for them to come back.	100%
SRLA	We don't seem to be doing a good job. 6 of us in this office all female. 5 Coord. Liaisons to teacher leaders, all male with 2 Hispanic	I don't know, I always feel things don't really apply exactly to us very well. We just serve kids.	There are no Black men in the organization	175 different schools and teachers are varied in every way, age, sex, we have everybody. Very diverse
WVBGC	Very committed in creating a workforce that is reflective of participants it serves. 80% of participants live below the poverty line. 18% African American	Very Inclusive. Frontline staff reflect diversity	Colorblind, don't look at color. If there was a blue person that applied for a position and their specialized meets our criteria of having passion for at-risk kids	Part-time programming staff
TVN	Environment is secondary schools. By design, high priority	We are intentional about encouraging participation of a cross-section of staff members in our program, with an emphasis on Black males	Clear about the role of a "Village Elder" and we encourage and support Black men in taking on that responsibility	70-80%

RESULTS



SERVICE				
Non Profit Organization	What they do	Goals for next 3 years	Priorities	Barriers
HOL	Train youth in the areas of music, video & audio production, editing, songwriting, script writing, story boarding, sound reinforcement for events, internet radio broadcasting & story boarding sessions	Obtain funding, Rubber stamp the organization across the US and offer these services across the US	Recruitment/ Funding in San Fernando Valley	Funding
SRLA	Promote healthy living, goal setting, and achievement of middle and high school students through training and completion of the LA Marathon	Continue to serve at risk kids, to continue to be able to raise the money to serve them.	Continue to serve at risk kids, to continue to be able to raise the money to serve them	
WVBGC	Have afterschool programs and full programs during holidays and summer. (i.e. homework club, sports, arts, etc.) Located at various schools. Cost is only \$35 per year. Scholarships are also available for those who can't afford it.	Maintain effective programs for kids (6-17 years old)	Staff development and training; continue to seek funding for programs, through grants.	Funding is an issue. If taxes go up, minimum wage, it affects our ability to maintain staff due to cost and programs. Affects participation of membership and employment.
TVN	AA students in a VN participate in activities including holistic healing, consciousness raising, and racial uplift. Promotes collective peer culture that provides readiness for school, college, community, and life.	Increase # of schools, IHEs and organizations in TVN Network ; Expand TVN's reach to schools, districts and IHEs; Strengthen and expand relationships with African American donors; Develop TVN's capacity as an online stakeholder resource; Deliver a crippling blow that helps dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline in all schools and districts	Expand BOD; Strategic fundraising to support infrastructure; Hire additional staff; Local capacity building; Increase visibility	Limited Funding and negative stereotypes about AA youth

DISCUSSION POINTS

- **Structurally**, the Village Nation(TVN) has a high percentage of Black males who are board members, executive directors, and/or staff in comparison to the other three nonprofits interviewed. This also includes leadership positions (60%).
 - ❑ The Village Nation is very intentional in their approach to recruitment. They provide meaningful roles, leadership activities, as well as recognition of their service.
 - ❑ Both Students Run LA (SRLA) and the West Valley Boys & Girls Club (WVBGC) do not have any Black males in board level and executive director roles; however, WVBGC has representation in their part-time staff pool with 2 Black males in leadership roles.
 - ❑ Perceptions of effective recruitment/ retention of Black males were varied ranging from intentionality to no determination. The term "Colorblind" was used to rationalize diversity commitments

- **Organizationally**, all the nonprofits value a racially diverse and inclusive work environment; however, Students Run LA (SRLA) self identified themselves as not doing a good job in this area. The organization is small and more gender specific (6 females in immediate office).
 - ❑ Heroes of Life (HOL) seems to pride themselves in bringing differences together in song, through rhythm and words; however, participation of Black males is very low.
 - ❑ Perception of workforce diversity was mixed in the aggregate. SRLA's perception of service is BASED on at risk kids in general, while WVBGC believe their frontline staff reflect diversity. WVBGC has a population of 18% African American who participate in their programs.
 - ❑ It is important to note that Heroes of Life and the Village Nation are led by Black males.

- **Service wise**, the TVN model also includes meaningful school-wide activities that build harmonious relationships and solidarity with all ethnic groups
 - ❑ Heroes of Life and The Village Nation seemed to embrace the notion that leaders of color pursue ambitious professional goals, thus promoting self determination in the population they serve.
 - ❑ Funding continues to be a priority and a challenge to obtain for the majority of the NPOs interviewed. Explanations include the negative images of Black males and the funder's lack of interest in Black males.
 - ❑ Expansion of services and capacity was also identified by TVN and HOL. SRLA has reached capacity at 3000-3500 students each year. While SRLA and the WVBGC are not involved in the specific recruitment of Black boys and Black males in leadership roles, they will continue to serve at-risk kids through fund raising strategies to service them.

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San Fernando Valley, CA

Cities & Population (2007)

- Burbank 107,921
- Calabasas 23,652
- Glendale 207,157
- Los Angeles 1,474,634
- San Fernando 25,145
- Unincorporated Areas and Hidden Hills 2,040



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